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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/31/2021

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SUBJECT: PRC EVACUATES CITIZENS, OTHERS FROM EAST TIMOR

Classified By: Classified by Political Minister Counselor Daniel Shield  
s. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) A charter plane arrived in China from Dili on the evening of May 30 with over 240 PRC citizens, overseas Chinese, non-PRC nationals and PRC Embassy staff, MFA Asian Affairs Department Deputy Division Director He Wei told poloff on May 31. He Wei said he has not received any reports of American citizens among the evacuees. When the crisis in East Timor began the MFA instructed the PRC Embassy in Dili to contact the Chinese community to see if they needed any assistance. There were few takers at first, but as the situation worsened and the violence escalated, a growing number of overseas Chinese and others sought refuge in the PRC Embassy. It was at that point that Beijing decided to quickly evacuate those who wanted to depart. He Wei said the PRC Embassy has been in close contact with the Australian military and civilian officials in Dili and that the Australian military provided protection to the convoy that transported the evacuees to the airport.

¶2. (C) He Wei said that although China in principle only evacuates PRC passport holders, PRC officials in Dili did not turn away non-PRC nationals who wanted to depart East Timor. Most were ethnic Chinese holding non-PRC passports, but there were a few Koreans and other nationals that were married to Chinese citizens or had some other connection to China, according to He Wei. He said no American citizens were involved in the PRC-organized charter flight, as far as he knew.

¶3. (C) He Wei said China is very concerned about the situation in Dili and does not see improvement in the near future. The PRC Embassy staff presence has been reduced and Beijing continues to monitor the situation closely, He Wei stated.

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